Brainstem Cavernous Malformation in a Male Collegiate Soccer Player
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**Background:** The patient is a 21-year-old male NJCAA collegiate soccer player with history of one concussion and other possible concussions that did not receive medical attention. Following a week of practice in September 2015, the athlete arrived in the athletic training room complaining of a headache, feeling slowed down and having balance issues. The athlete reported difficulty with coordination and writing with his left hand, while also presenting with nystagmus and unsteadiness during Rhomberg. The athlete had negative findings for vestibular ocular reflex, extra ocular movements intact and pronator drift. The athlete decided to follow up with his family physician a week later due to noticing no improvements in his symptoms with rest. Similar findings to the initial evaluation were determined during the examination and an MRI was ordered. Two days after the MRI, the patient traveled back to the family physician. While in route to the physician’s office, the patient reported “feeling very weird” and had severe difficulty moving his left side as well as walking. The athlete was taken straight to the hospital instead. Differential Diagnosis: Concussion; subdural hematoma; stroke; tumor; subarachnoid hemorrhage. Treatment: The MRI identified a hemorrhaging cavernous near the brainstem indicating a diagnosis of brainstem cavernous malformation. After arriving at the hospital, the patient was immediately sent to an urgent care clinic to be monitored. By day three, the athlete was sent to critical care and admitted to the hospital for one week to be closely monitored due to symptoms not improving and possibly worsening in the urgent care. Upon release from the hospital, the athlete underwent inpatient therapy for a month and a half. The athlete was then sent to outpatient therapy until full function was restored. Once the athlete was fully functional, surgery was performed to remove the cavernous malformation. Uniqueness: Cavernous malformations only occur in .1 to .9% of the population. Cavernous malformations of the brainstem only account for 9 to 35% of all the cavernous malformations. Conclusion: Following the surgery and rehabilitation the athlete is now fully functional and has successfully returned to play collegiate soccer.

**Word Count:** 360